

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W
-----041336Z 056895 /40

R 041117Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6674
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CE
SUBJECT: CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF COMMUNIST PARTY COMMUNIQUE-A
DOCUMENT FOR ALL PEOPLE

1. IN A SOMEWHAT AMBIVALENT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING A MEETING OF ITS CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMUNIST PARTY/MOSCOW (CP) ATTEMPTED TO CLARIFY ITS PRESENT POSITION AND JUSTIFY ITS ACTIONS DURING THE RECENT STRIKE. WHILE THE CP COMMUNIQUE MILDLY CHASTIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE STRIKE, IT IN NO WAY INDICATED THAT THE CP MIGHT LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT.

2. ON FEBRUARY 3 THE CP ISSUED AN EAGERLY AWAITED STATEMENT FOLLOWING A MEETING OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE HALD JANUARY 29-30. THE COMMUNIQUE PAID HOMAGE TO UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT BY SAYING THAT IT HAS DONE MORE FOR THE COUNTRYIN THE PAST SIX YEARS THAN ANY PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, BUT EXORTED THE GOVERNMENT TO MEET THE FORMIDABLE UNP CHALLENGE BY PROVIDING THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES,
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ESPECIALLY YOUTH, CLEAR PERSPECTIVES ABOUT FUTURE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT. ON THE STRIKES, CP STATED THAT THEY AROSE FROM LEGITIMATE ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES AND WERE NOT POLITICALLY MOTIVATED TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE OPPOSITION MAY HAVE TRIED TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OF THEM.

3. CP DEFENDED ITS OWN ACTION DURING THE STRIKE IN THE COMMUNIQUE, ASSERTING THAT IT HAD URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SETTLE STRIKES THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND HAD NEVER ACCEPTED THE POLICY OF NO NEGOTIATIONS WHILE THE WORKERS WERE OUT ON STRIKE. PARTY ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL CAMPAIGN AROUND A PROGRAM OF DEMANDS AIMED AT EASING THE ECONOMIC BURDENS OF THE PEOPLE AND CALLED FOR A ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE IN THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY TO SETTLE PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES. THE CEYLON FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (CFTU), A COMMUNIST PARTY TRADE UNION, ON FEBRUARY 4 ALSO SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S "GOOD WORKS", AND SAID THAT IT WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO REBUILD THE UNITED FRONT IN ORDER TO AVERT THE UNP COMING TO POWER. ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE HEALING RIFT WITHIN THE COALITION IS PIETER KEUNEMAN'S ATTENDANCE AT A CABINET MEETING ON FEBRUARY 2, HIS FIRST SINCE THE GOVERNMENT DECLARED ENTIRE PUBLIC SECTOR AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE.

4. COMMENT. SOME PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE CP HAD BEEN EARGLY AWAITED AS A CLUE TO WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN NEXT ON THE LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE. SPECULATION HAD INCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE 6 CP DEPUTIES, POSSIBLY JOINED BY THE 4 DISSIDENT SLFP MEMBERS (AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE FROM THE SLFP CAMP) MIGHT STAGE A SPECTACULAR CROSSING OF THE AISLE ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON FEB. 17 ON THE OPPOSITION'S NO CONFIDENCE MOTION OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE RECENT STRIKE AFFAIR. THE PRESENT STATEMENT APPEARS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELIMINATE THIS POSSIBILITY AT LEAST BY THE CP MEMBERS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE LITTLE REASON FOR HER TO MOVE TO EXPEL THE CP FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN AN ELECTION YEAR. THIS ALSO STRENGTHENS HER HAND IN DECIDING WHEN TO CALL FOR ELECTIONS, AND MAKES ANY RECONSTITUTION OF THE OLD UF COALITION TO INCLUDE THE LSSP EVEN LESS LIKELY THAN BEFORE. REED

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Reason:
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